

Top Secret

25X1

HR

USIB

UNITED STATES
INTELLIGENCE
BOARD

National Intelligence Bulletin

OSD review
completed

State Dept. review
completed

Top Secret

April 14, 1975

25X1

No 657

Page Denied

National Intelligence Bulletin

April 14, 1975

CONTENTS

CAMBODIA: Reshuffled leadership tries to hold on.
(Page 1)

VIETNAM: Situation report. (Page 3)

PORTUGAL: Tensions again on the rise. (Page 7)

EGYPT: Prime minister and cabinet resign. (Page 9)

CUBA: Draft constitution foreshadows broad political changes. (Page 11)

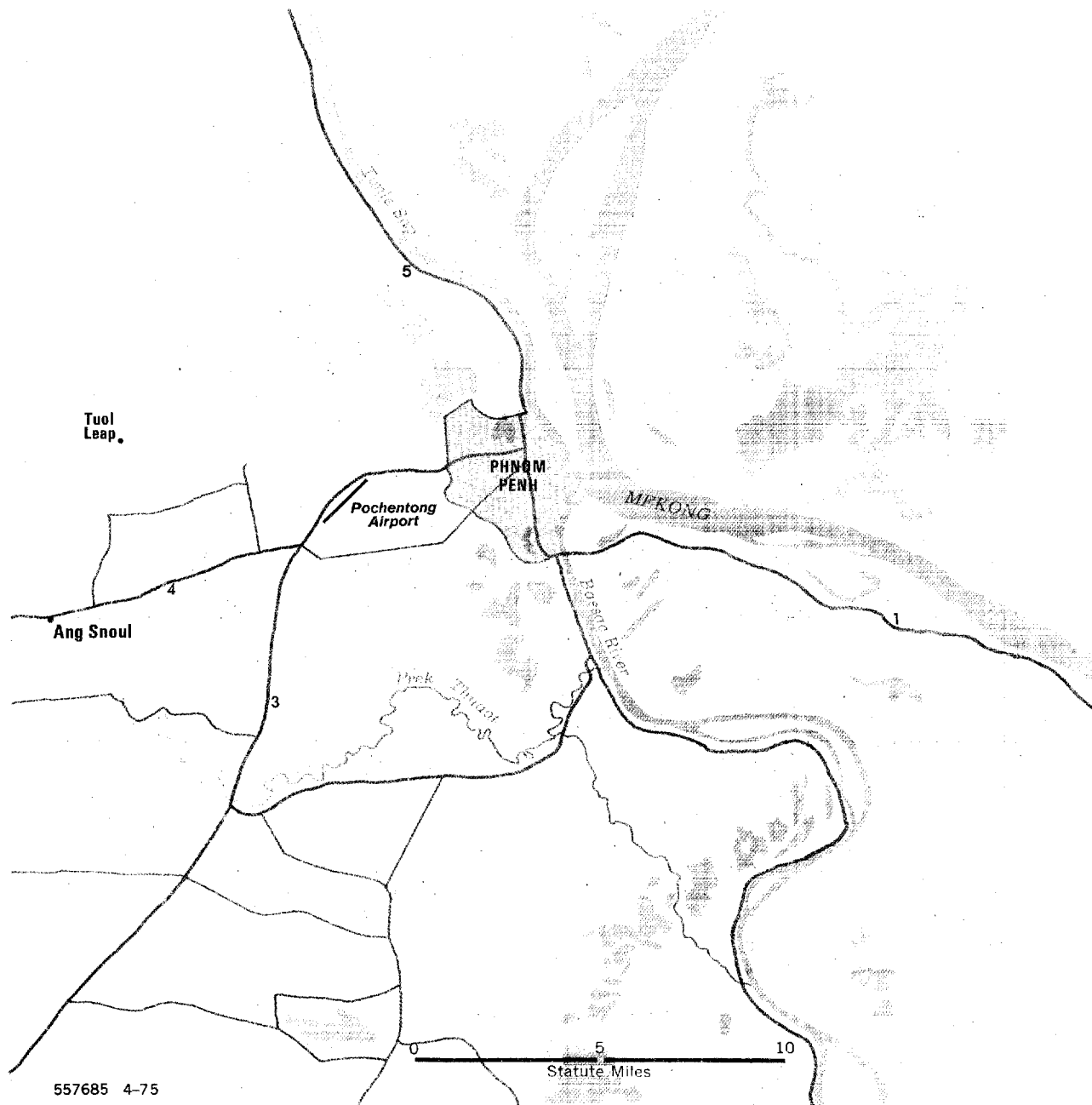
CHAD: Armed Forces commander Odingar seizes power.
(Page 13)

SYRIA-IRAQ: Dispute continues over Euphrates water and Iraqi meddling in Syria. (Page 14)

USSR-IRAQ: Husayn makes visit to reassure Moscow.
(Page 16)

FOR THE RECORD: (Page 17)

Phnom Penh



National Intelligence Bulletin

April 14, 1975

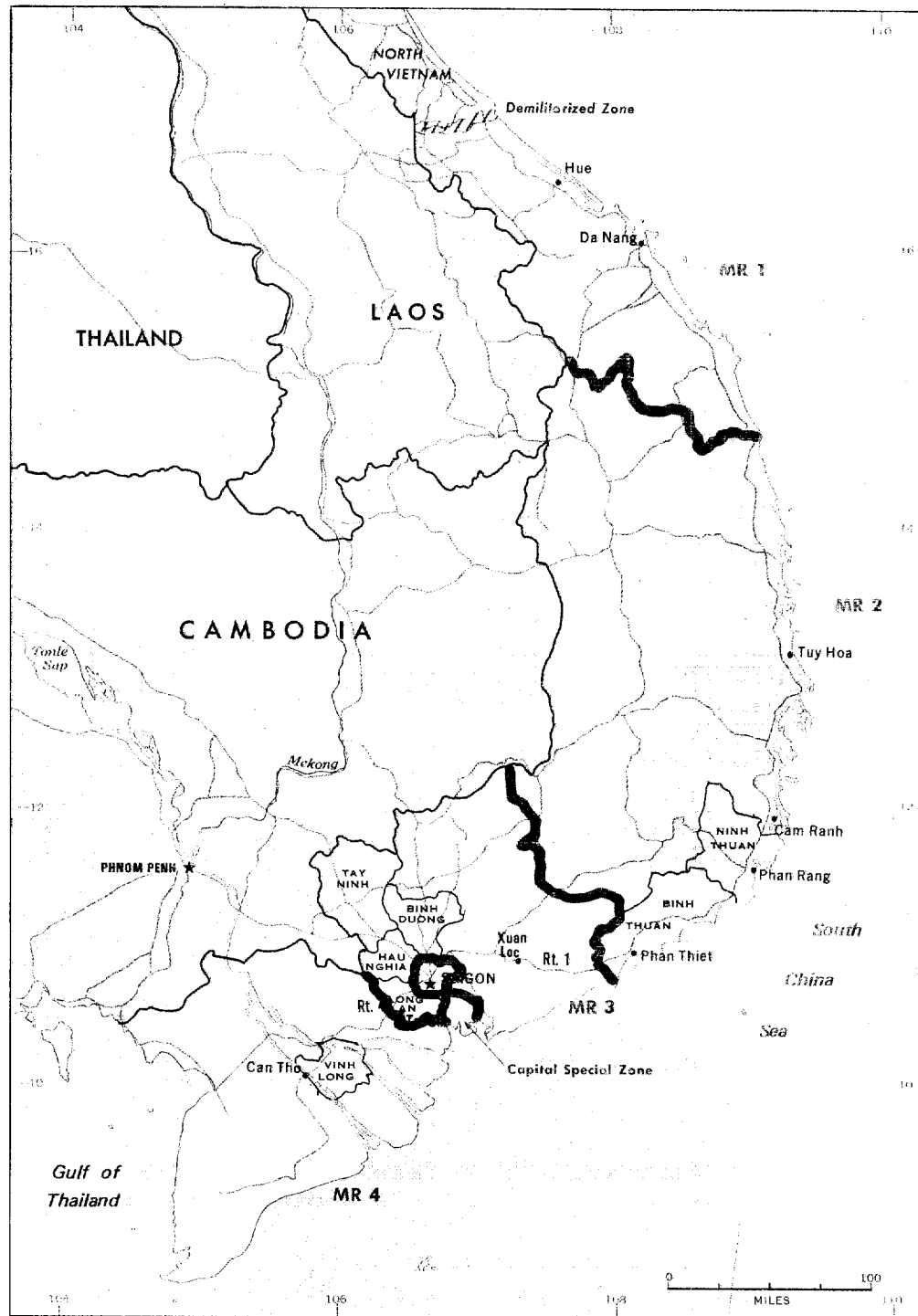
CAMBODIA

The newly reshuffled leadership in Phnom Penh appears resolved to hold on as long as possible. In announcing the formation of a new "Supreme Council" and the imposition of martial law over the weekend, Council President Sak Sutsakhan and Vice President Long Boret both pledged a policy of "strengthening the military and political position" of the government with the aim of achieving a "peaceful solution" through negotiations. Despite the indisputable element of valor in the desire of the remaining leaders to see things through to the end, the government's position will become untenable within two weeks as it simply runs out of the wherewithal to continue fighting.

Sak Sutsakhan announced over Radio Phnom Penh early this morning that a T-28 fighter had dropped two bombs on the general staff headquarters compound in the capital. Sak said he and his "colleagues" were unhurt, but that seven persons were killed and a number wounded. He called on the populace to remain calm, and imposed a new curfew.

late-breaking radio broadcasts from Phnom Penh said that the insurgents had commenced a heavy shelling barrage against the city.

Elsewhere in the country, government defenses around the southeastern provincial capital of Svay Rieng reportedly collapsed in the face of heavy insurgent attacks on April 12. Some government units were still holding on yesterday, but local officials reported that the fall of the city was imminent.



557687 4-75

National Intelligence Bulletin

April 14, 1975

SOUTH VIETNAM

Heavy fighting continues in the Xuan Loc area. The city's reinforced defenders have beaten back strong communist attacks, and clashes around the city have resulted in heavy communist losses. Effective air and artillery support has contributed significantly to the South Vietnamese efforts to stand and fight.

Route 1 connecting Xuan Loc and Saigon is, however, still blocked by communist forces.

25X1

the South Vietnamese military is using the "Vietnamese B-52," the C-130, to bomb enemy troops massed around Xuan Loc, and along interdicted stretches of Route 1 west of the city.

In the delta, strong counterattacks by elements of the government's 7th Division have forced two regiments of the North Vietnamese 5th Division to curtail their drive to cut Route 4 southwest of Saigon.

25X1

Moreover, government forces from the delta plan to hit the 5th Division from the rear. A task force of infantry and armor is to sweep south from its current position just inside Cambodia and attack the 5th Division in western Long An Province. At the same time, a part of the South Vietnamese 7th Division has received permission from Military Region 3 Headquarters to move up from the south and engage the 5th as far north as Tan An.

Meanwhile, the communists are moving additional forces into position for an assault on the western approach to Saigon. Most of the North Vietnamese 9th Division and supporting air defense units have been detected shifting into northeastern Hau Nghia Province. These units had been concentrated along the Tay Ninh - Binh Duong province border farther north. The communists now

National Intelligence Bulletin April 14, 1975

have almost three full divisions--the 3rd, 5th, and 9th--along Saigon's western defense perimeter, and this could well force the South Vietnamese to shift reinforcements to this front.

The most significant communist military action over the weekend in Military Region 4 was in the central delta. Government counterattacks against two communist regiments which had been blocking Route 4 just north of Can Tho in Vinh Long Province succeeded in reopening the highway early this morning. Communist losses were described as heavy. Communist gunners also zeroed in on Can Tho, and shelling Saturday resulted in fires that destroyed a large residential section of the city. Government troops manning the defense line around Can Tho reported they inflicted heavy losses on the communists.

Government holdings in coastal Ninh Thuan and Binh Thuan provinces are likely to be seriously challenged soon. Elements of the North Vietnamese 968th Division were detected on April 11 along Route 1 near Cam Ranh. This division participated in the capture of Tuy Hoa and now has moved south to link up with the North Vietnamese 10th Division, apparently in preparation for attacks on the cities of Phan Rang and Phan Thiet. The South Vietnamese also believe the North Vietnamese 320th Division may be moving into attack positions west of Phan Rang. The loss of a government position just four miles northeast of Phan Thiet on Saturday and continued shelling of the city indicate the communists are increasing pressure on the town.

* * * *

The government is making considerable progress in rebuilding the combat units extracted from northern and central South Vietnam, and many of them will soon be ready for combat. The best of these units, the Marine Division, already has two brigades that can be used in combat. A third brigade is scheduled to complete reorganization in a week and a fourth brigade about a week later.

In addition, the 2nd Division now has four operational battalions, and several others are scheduled to be ready for combat late this week. Altogether, the

National Intelligence Bulletin

April 14, 1975

division expects to have 11 battalions formed and operational by early next month. Parts of two reorganized regiments have been dispatched to Phan Rang and Phan Thiet cities.

So far, the 3rd Division has only one battalion ready for combat, but it plans to form a complete regiment by early May. In addition, three ranger groups should become operational later this month, and new artillery units are being created for assignment to the rebuilt infantry regiments and divisions.

South Vietnamese officials have been buoyed by the large amount of military assistance requested of Congress, but remain skeptical that the sums will be appropriated. April 19 is generally being regarded as a sort of "doomsday" for South Vietnam, and the pending debate on the aid requests between now and then could have a significant impact on the military and political situation in South Vietnam.

President Thieu's principal economic adviser has stated that President Ford's address to the Congress implied that the US wants South Vietnam to "do all it can to stabilize the military situation" and that "some military victories" before April 19 would improve chances of Congressional approval of the aid package. Such an attitude probably in part explains the large numbers of troops and amounts of equipment the South Vietnamese are committing to the battle for Xuan Loc.

Communist reaction to the President's speech continues to decry the additional requests for military assistance and the forced evacuation of Vietnamese orphans and civilians. Hanoi and the Viet Cong media, however, have begun to focus more sharply on the evacuation of Americans. Both have charged that the "protection of the safety of Americans" is a pretext for military intervention and warn that such a scheme will be "severely punished." The Provisional Revolutionary Government, in a statement broadcast Sunday, maintained that the best protection the US could afford its personnel was to "immediately withdraw" them from South Vietnam. The broadcast stated that such withdrawals

National Intelligence Bulletin April 14, 1975

"will certainly not encounter any difficulties or obstacles" if begun immediately but that the Viet Cong "are determined not to allow the US...to send warships and marines to intervene in South Vietnam."

Prime Minister - designate Nguyen Ba Can presided over the first working session of his new cabinet Saturday preparatory to swearing-in ceremonies scheduled for sometime tomorrow. The important portfolios of defense, interior, and foreign affairs apparently have been filled and approved by President Thieu. Tran Van Don, Buu Vien, and Vuong Van Bac, who hold the three positions respectively, are all holdovers from the previous cabinet. Don and Bac are generally regarded as independents and probably can be best characterized as members of the loyal opposition.

25X1
25X1

National Intelligence Bulletin

April 14, 1975

PORTUGAL

The Revolutionary Council this weekend announced further efforts to nationalize "basic sectors" of the economy, while rumors circulating in Lisbon indicate that political tensions are again on the rise.

The leaders of the ruling Armed Forces Movement decided Friday to proceed with reorganizing the economy for the "transition to socialism" by nationalizing privately held interests in communications and transportation. The Movement also expressed its concern over Portugal's sagging economy--decreasing production and investments, rising prices, and a growing trade deficit. It announced that controls will be placed on basic food prices. Previous Movement statements have promised that the new cabinet will present an emergency economic plan within three weeks.

The US embassy reports that rumors of a new power play are widespread in Lisbon, although very little specific information is available. It is increasingly clear that the Armed Forces Movement regrets its promise to hold elections, now scheduled for April 25, because of fear that the results will show poor support for the Movement's program. Moderates are still concerned that an effort will be made to cancel or delay the elections, and there are rumors that some Movement leaders are considering a roundup of certain moderate and conservative opposition politicians.

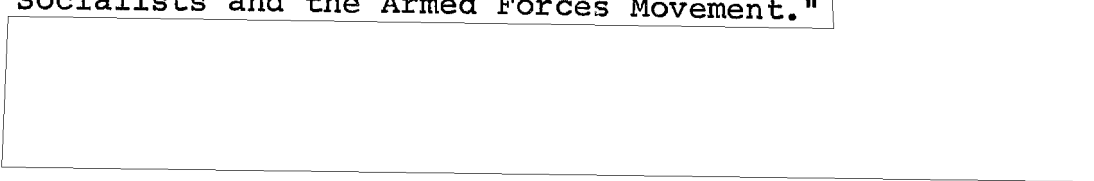
In addition, the Movement has alienated several extreme left-wing parties, which have voiced opposition to the institutionalization of the Movement and to the election process. The Movement has banned one party, prohibited another from participating in elections, and suspended a third for five days from campaigning on radio and television.

The emergence of Admiral Rosa Coutinho's ambitions to be first among equals within the Movement's leadership contributes to the general tension. Coutinho suggested last week that the performance of the civilian political parties had been so poor that the Movement

National Intelligence Bulletin

April 14, 1975

should form its own party, whose ideological base would lie somewhere between the Communists and Socialists. Socialist leader Mario Soares responded by denouncing "intense intrigue to compromise the alliance between the Socialists and the Armed Forces Movement."



25X1

National Intelligence Bulletin

April 14, 1975

EGYPT

Prime Minister Hijazi and his cabinet yesterday submitted their resignations to President Sadat. This action appears designed to clear the way for the personnel changes that are expected to accompany the President's anticipated announcement that he is implementing an "internal action program" to treat the country's economic ills.

According to Cairo radio, Sadat will address the nation today to outline the required "work to be done on the domestic front in the coming phase." He is expected to appeal for wide popular support for government programs to deal with the country's economic, transportation, and housing problems.

Sadat may also announce the composition of a new cabinet, although this step could be delayed several days. Even the promise of cabinet changes will serve his immediate purpose of drawing attention away from the breakdown of peace negotiations and focusing it on his plans for economic development.

The most extensive cabinet changes probably will come in the technical and economic ministries. Several of the incumbents are overworked, incompetent, or ill. New faces in these ministries would provide evidence that Sadat is determined to solve Egypt's economic problems and--presumably--exempt him from heavy domestic criticism for a period of at least several months.

The future of Hijazi, who has overall responsibility for the economy, is uncertain. His appointment last year raised speculation that he was being set up to absorb criticism of the government's failures and that he would later be abandoned by Sadat. Hijazi recently has been doing a good job, however, and the President has few obvious alternative candidates from whom to choose.

Cairo newspapers reported yesterday that Sadat has turned aside suggestions that he himself assume the post of prime minister. The President did serve as his own prime minister in 1973 and 1974.

National Intelligence Bulletin

April 14, 1975

The most important figures in the cabinet--Foreign Minister Fahmi and War Minister Gamassy--are likely to retain their posts. Sadat has recently gone out of his way to demonstrate his regard for Fahmi; only last week he announced that the foreign minister would be sent to Moscow on April 19.

According to the Cairo press, Fahmi's mission will be to discuss Egyptian and Soviet preparations for a possible resumption of the Geneva peace conference. Fahmi is reportedly preparing for comprehensive talks that will range from such substantive questions as the nature of a final settlement to procedural questions such as how to provide for Palestinian participation in the conference.

25X1

National Intelligence Bulletin

April 14, 1975

CUBA

The draft of a long-promised constitution published in Havana on Thursday foreshadows sweeping changes on the Cuban domestic political scene. The draft, which is likely to undergo substantial revision before the constitution goes into effect next year, also envisages continuing hostility to the US.

In its present form, the draft raises questions about Prime Minister Fidel Castro's role in the new government. The position of prime minister would be abolished, and the Council of Ministers replaced by a State Council composed of a president, a first deputy president, and five deputy presidents. The president would be chief of state.

The post of commander in chief of the armed forces, which Castro now holds, would be assigned to the president. Castro would thus have to become president to retain his statutory authority over the armed forces, his most important prop.

Two articles in the draft have direct implications for relations with the US. One, which recognizes "the right of peoples to repel imperialist violence with revolutionary violence," is evidently intended to show Cuban resolve in the face of US and OAS insistence that Havana stop meddling in the internal affairs of other countries. Another article, in effect, would require Cuba to insist that the US admit the "illegality" of the treaties and agreements that provide the basis for the US naval base at Guantanamo Bay.

The Cuban Communist Party's Political Bureau approved the draft constitution as "an adequate base for public and popular discussion." It added that the draft would be reviewed at the party's first national congress this fall, which is to approve a final text. The draft is then supposed to be approved in a popular referendum, probably early next year.

National Intelligence Bulletin

April 14, 1975

The failure of the Political Bureau clearly to advocate the draft and the care taken to pave the way for future changes suggest that the party itself may have doubts about some of the provisions.

25X1

National Intelligence Bulletin

April 14, 1975

CHAD

The acting commander of the armed forces, Brigadier General Odingar, seized power yesterday from President Tombalbaye after several hours of fighting between guards at the presidential palace and the combined forces of the army and gendarmerie.

Odingar has suspended the constitution, dissolved the National Assembly, banned all political activity, and affirmed support for Chad's international agreements and commitments. A new government has not yet been formed. There is no evidence of any foreign involvement in the coup. France, the country's principal source of economic, technical, and military aid did not respond to Tombalbaye's request for military support during the coup.

According to a radio announcement, Tombalbaye--in power since Chad gained independence in 1960--was killed during the coup.

Odingar's decision to move was probably motivated in part by Tombalbaye's recent efforts to discredit the army's leadership and his announcement last week to conduct a complete reorganization of the army. Odingar has released the three top military leaders arrested by Tombalbaye earlier this month, including the commander of the gendarmerie. He also released former armed forces commander General Malloum, who was arrested in 1973 for allegedly plotting to overthrow the government.

Odingar may also have been influenced by dissatisfaction with the government's inability to overcome Chad's chronic economic stagnation and with government corruption and maladministration. The 43-year-old Odingar is a fellow Sara tribesman of Tombalbaye and he received military training in France. There is no hard evidence on his political beliefs.

25X1

National Intelligence BulletinApril 14, 1975

SYRIA-IRAQ

Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam has rejected Iraq's recent call for an urgent meeting of Arab foreign ministers to discuss Baghdad's charges that Syria is diverting water from the Euphrates River. In an attempt to halt the continuing serious deterioration of relations, however, Khaddam did agree to have the matter discussed at a technical level, "since it has no political aspects."

Syria does not want the dispute to escalate to the point that Iraq might refuse to provide Syria with military support in the event of another round of hostilities with Israel. Damascus is also apprehensive that a prolonged dispute with Iraq would threaten Syria's now very good relations with Algeria, another Arab radical.

Despite these considerations, the Syrians probably are withholding water from Iraq in retaliation for Baghdad's apparent involvement in a recent attempt to weaken or overthrow the government of President Asad. Damascus is not likely to allow a meeting of technical experts to "solve" the problem until it receives some indication that Baghdad is willing to moderate its propaganda attacks on President Asad and limit its interference in Syria's domestic affairs.

By April 8, Syrian authorities reportedly had arrested approximately 400 Syrians for their involvement in the alleged Iraqi-sponsored conspiracy to oust or assassinate Asad.

Damascus is also taking actions against the Iraqis. According to reports reaching the US embassy in Damascus, the Iraqi ambassador and his staff are under 24-hour surveillance, and lower level Iraqi diplomats are being harassed by Syrian authorities. The Syrian Baath Party congress last week condemned the "suspicious right-wing regime" in Iraq for its collusion with Iran, its sabotage of Arab solidarity, and its abandonment of the Palestinians.

Page Denied

National Intelligence BulletinApril 14, 1975

USSR-IRAQ

Moscow and Baghdad hope that the visit of Iraqi strongman Saddam Husayn Tikriti to the USSR beginning today will serve to keep relations steady, following the agreement between Iran and Iraq signed in Algiers last month.

Statements by Soviet officials and Moscow's lukewarm endorsement of the Algiers accord betray Soviet fears that the agreement could lead to decreased Soviet influence in Baghdad. The agreement ended Iranian military support for the rebellious Iraqi Kurds. The easing of tension with Iran and the collapse of the Kurdish rebellion have greatly decreased Baghdad's need for Soviet arms and military equipment. Although Husayn's visit was arranged before the accord was signed, the Soviets will be sure to probe him on the terms of the settlement.

Even before the agreement, the Soviets were upset with Iraq's efforts to attract Western technical expertise and to buy Western arms. Communist diplomats in Baghdad now gloomily suggest that Iraq will expand its ties to the West, even to the point of resuming diplomatic relations with the US.

The Iraqis apparently hope that Saddam Husayn's fifth visit to the USSR since 1970 will reassure Moscow. The newspaper of the ruling Baath Party took a step in that direction last week when it marked the third anniversary of the Iraq-Soviet Friendship Treaty by reasserting the "firm strategic relations" between the two countries. Over the short term, at least, Iraq will continue to look to the USSR for military spare parts, technical assistance, and training for its predominantly Soviet-equipped military.

The two sides will probably continue to sidestep their different approaches to the Arab-Israeli impasse. Moscow has long wanted Baghdad to moderate its rigid opposition to a negotiated settlement with Israel and to support the Soviet approach to the Geneva peace talks. Baghdad, however, has not budged.

National Intelligence Bulletin

April 14, 1975

Iraq is likely to push for Soviet assistance in resolving its dispute with Syria over the water flow in the Euphrates River. Baghdad complains bitterly that the Soviet-built Euphrates Dam in Syria diverts Iraq's share of the river. The Soviets, who once proposed an agreement to Baghdad and Damascus to regulate the water flow, may view mediation of the dispute as one way of maintaining influence in Iraq.

New economic agreements may be announced during the visit. Iraq, which has over \$300 million in unused Soviet credits, has recently held intensive negotiations with the USSR on numerous irrigation projects. Baghdad may give the Soviets a major role in a \$2-billion, five-year irrigation program in order to reassure Moscow that it will retain a significant economic role despite the rapid growth of Iraqi-Western economic dealings.

25X1

25X1

FOR THE RECORD

Turkey: The Demirel government won its initial parliamentary vote of confidence on April 12. The vote was 222-218 in favor of Demirel's four-party, right-of-center coalition. The closeness of the vote illustrates the fragile nature of the alliance Demirel has pieced together. It is questionable whether the weak government can remain in power for an extended period.

25X1

25X1

Top Secret



25X1

Top Secret



25X1